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LEADING LEARNING: IMPLEMENTING THE QUEENSLAND MATHEMATICS SYLLABUS

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We report on the conduct of a two-year study of how a model of professional development (PD) supported two, year 3 teachers while implementing new content incorporated within the new mathematics syllabus. We explore what supported a professional learning community to develop a sense of agency and leadership for learning and how this was sustained two years on. The aim of the study was to develop teacher content and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance their agency when implementing the syllabus.

The data sources included researcher field notes and interviews with the teachers. The teachers talked about the importance of the collaborative PD and the provision of appropriate literature, websites and suitable materials, and the ongoing access to the researcher as a way to support their growth in content and pedagogy knowledge. They talked about their sense of ownership of the lessons they developed. They also identified preparation of lesson plans as supporting their construction of knowledge. When probed about the reflective discussion at the end of each lesson, the teachers were in agreement that this period of reflection supported their ongoing development.

For the two years following the project one teacher had continued to teach Year 3. When asked to reflect on the PD and how it was structured she commented,

Pam: It really changed my way of thinking...We worked together collaboratively. That made our lessons more successful and we were very honest with each other... Even when [researcher] wasn't there we would actually just sit there and say what does this actually mean? ... All the talking helped us to get the language of mental computation to teach it...The readings and websites were good too but I tell you what was great. The concept maps!

There was evidence that the teachers began to lead their own learning. The teachers collaborated, supporting each other's growth in content and pedagogical content knowledge as well as agency. This leading of learning by the teachers themselves is a powerful opportunity to bringing about educational change that has not been realised traditionally (Frost, 2006). It is argued that, for teachers to develop a sense of agency, shared leadership must be possible and this is best reflected within a professional learning community where teachers have the capacity to influence outcomes.

References

Frost, D. (2006). The concept of 'agency' in leadership for learning. *Leading and Managing: Journal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders*, 12(2), 19-28.